THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Working Group on New and Renewable Energy has been established under the India-Japan Energy Dialogue to coordinate cooperation activities in new and renewable energy. The first meeting of the Working Group was held on the 28th June, 2007 at New Delhi wherein it was decided that both sides will explore ways and means to further cooperation in the field of new and renewable energy.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Electrification of villages in Bihar

827. SHRI MOTTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a vast majority of rural population still has no access to electricity and is dependent on kerosene lamps and lanterns;

(b) if so, the schemes formulated for electrification of 25,000 remote villages/ hamlets;

(c) the reasons for not electrifying even a single remote village of Bihar under the Remote Village Electrification Programme by the 30th November, 2004; and

(d) the list of 273 remote villages of the State identified for electrification under the programme, district-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR): (a) As per the Office Memorandum dated 18th March, 2005, issued by Ministry of Power for Rajeev Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana, out of 13.8 crore rural house holds in the country, around 7.8 crore rural house holds (as per 2001 census) do not have access to electricity and may thus have to depend upon alternatives such as kerosene lamps and lanterns for illumination.

(b to (d) A Programme for financial support of upto 90% of the costs of projects for electrification through renewable sources of energy of remote unelectrified census villages and unelectrified hamlets of electrified census villages, is being implemented by the Ministry. The number of such villages was tentatively arrived at 24418 before 2005-06 on the basis of information provided by the states. This included a list of 273 villages in 23 districts of Bihar submitted by the State Government. After initiation of the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana by the Ministry of Power, only those villages/hamlets where grid connectivity is either not feasible or not cost effective will be covered under the Remote Village Electrification Programme. The task of identification of such villages has been entrusted to the Rural Electrification Corporation who have so far identified 72 such villages in West Champaran District of Bihar. The State Government has been advised to submit proposals for coverage of these villages under the Programme. However, no such proposal has so far been received.